**Agriculture and Food Security Forum**

**14.30 – 17.00, Thursday 6th March 2020**

**Mandela Room, Edinburgh City Chambers, 253 High Street, EH1 1YJ**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Andrew Heald**, Confederation of Forest Industries

**Andrew Parker**, Imani Development

**Aubrey Chilenje**, Kasinthula Cane Growers Association

**Caroline Wiley**, Challenges Worldwide

**Craig Docking**, Scotland Malawi Partnership

**David Hope-Jones**, Scotland Malawi Partnership

**Dr Charles Howie**, Malawi Fruits

**E James**

**Ed Gordon**, Scottish Fair Trade Forum

**Eve Broadis**, Fair Trade Scotland Ltd

**Heather Cubie**, University of Edinburgh and Chair of Scotland Malawi Partnership

**Isla Farley**, Imani Development

**Jenny Gilruth MSP**, Scottish Government

**Katie Finn**, University of Edinburgh

**Martin Rhodes**, Scottish Fair Trade Forum

**Mary Popple**, Just Trading Scotland

**Ndiuzayani Zana**, Kasinthula Cane Growers Association

**Phil Broadis**, Fair Trade Scotland Ltd

**Russell Salton**, Edinburgh Fair Trade City Steering Group

**Simon Calvert**, DFID

**Stuart Brown**, Scotland Malawi Partnership

**Tasha Boardman**, Scottish Government

**Thomas Echlin-Harrardine**, Whitfield Echlin & Company LLP

**MINUTES:**

On Thursday 6th March 2020, the [**Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP)**](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/) held an Agriculture and Food Security Forum, as part of Fair Trade Fprtnight, co-hosted by the [**Scottish Fair Trade Forum (SFTF)**](http://www.scottishfairtradeforum.org.uk/). The meeting explored the topic of Fairtrade, with a focus on women’s empowerment in agriculture and food security.

**Chief Executive of the SMP David Hope-Jones** welcomed attendees and gave a brief overview of the SMP, the purpose of the Forum and the aims for the afternoon. The SMP was also pleased to welcome the recently appointed **Minister for Europe and International Development, Jenny Gilruth MSP** to the meeting. The Minister reflected that her new position was very different from her previous one, and she was enthusiastic to learn more. She recalled the SMP being present during her time as a teacher, and is very supportive of their approach to partnership. All attendees were then given the opportunity to introduce themselves and their organisation.

A keynote address was delivered by special guests and members of the [**Kasinthula Cane Growers Association (KCG)**](http://www.kasinthula.mw/) [**Ms Ndiuzayani Zaya**](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/files/1915/8282/2195/Ndiuzayani_Zaya_Profile_FINAL_word.pdf) and [**Mr Aubrey Chilenje**](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/files/1215/8282/2104/Aubrey_Meki_Chilenje_Profile_FINAL_word.pdf). They thanked the SMP for helping support their UK Visa applications, noting that this was currently difficult due to factors such as Covid-19. KCG, located in southern Malawi, is a smallholder sugar cane project that has been Fairtrade certified since 2002. Please click each speaker’s name to learn more about their involvement with and the role of the KCG. Aubrey shared some of the benefits that have resulted from his farm’s membership of the KCG. The local community gathers to decide how the money generated through Fairtrade can best be spent, which has included development of new land to support 200 more farmers, new farming machinery, a truck with a range of uses, better access to clean water, improved housing, a new clinic and a building that serves as both a canteen and conference hall. The speakers encouraged the purchase of more Fairtrade products, and showcased some of the brands which make use of their produce, such as Divine Chocolate (samples of which were distributed by the Chief Executive of the SFTF Martin Rhodes!), Green & Blacks, FairBreak and Liberation.

**Martin Rhodes** gave an overview of the organisation and the [**Fairtrade Fortnight**](https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get%20involved/Current-campaigns/Fairtrade-Fortnight?gclid=CjwKCAjwqJ_1BRBZEiwAv73uwPer98KT13i9HjAvH4JJ96M53T-cwR5JPMUfaTX6Xdd-9dbXENGv1xoCRgIQAvD_BwE) initiative, this year’s theme of which was ‘**She ‘Deserves**’. Fairtrade Fortnight brings together thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK to share stories of the people who grow much of the produce we consume on a daily basis and the difficulties they face. This year had a particular focus on cocoa and the special role women farmers play in the journey towards living incomes, whilst highlighting the gross inequalities in the multi-billion pound global chocolate industry. Martin highlighted that there was accountability between producers and consumers, and we should use this campaign to learn from each other.

This was followed by a Q&A session with the Malawian guests:

**Can you explain the emotions experienced when moving from a small plot to a larger organisation and the gender differences within the household?**

This is a positive experience that brings farmers together, as they know this is a good business opportunity. Women are better able to stand out and express their views, often bringing new perspectives to a discussion.

**How does the decrease in production relate to the use of subsidised chemical fertilisers i.e. is the soil being exhausted?**

Few Malawians actually have access to such fertilisers, but they do have a negative effect on the soil.

**Has the Fairtrade premium helped to improve people’s diets?**

The premium can be used to purchase more food for the farmers.

**Many of the jobs within sugarcane production are physically demanding, leaving fewer places for women. How have changes been achieved in terms of the growing female workforce?**

More women are finding jobs that are less physically demanding compared to harvesting, such as drivers and administrative roles.

**Can you provide more information on the mechanics of how the KCG works together?**

A governance forum presides over the KCG, and a group exists to manage the day-to-day operations.

**Can you describe some of the successes that have resulted from the growth and use of bamboo?**

Bamboo has a number of different uses, such as in cooking and as firewood, which makes it a deterrent to deforestation. It also creates more jobs for women.

**Are you using your own compost?**

There is a need for knowledge in this area, and further discussion after the meeting would be helpful.

**Do farmers need to stay active on a continual basis to remain part of the KSGA?**

Most work is done as a collective, rather than individually.

**Have changes within the EU since 2016 had an impact?**

Not much has changed.

**Senior Commercial Agriculture Adviser Simon Calvert** gave an update on **DFID’s work in Malawi**. There is currently concern that SDG2 (Zero Hunger) is making negative progress, with 800 million people in the world still hungry. One of DFID’s goals is to achieve sector transformation through the commercialisation of agriculture to maximize inclusive growth by raising rural incomes, creating jobs and attracting investment. Their objectives include the supply and support of smallholder farmers to increase their incomes, food and nutrition security and resilience by increasing their productivity and linking them to markets, and to boost responsible investment in agriculture to create jobs, grow demand for farmer produce and increase food security. Increasingly, they are targeting the large “missing middle” – emergent poor smallholders with potential to step up and commercialise. Examples of success can be found in support for hybrid poultry and aquaculture, raised incomes for oil seed farmers and the empowerment of women farmers within the tea sector. DFID hopes that its new Malawi Trade & Investment Programme will lead to will lead to sustained acceleration in inclusive dynamic growth, in turn leading to increased foreign and domestic investment, increased volume of exports and increased smallholder incomes. DFID’s agriculture policy can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfids-conceptual-framework-on-agriculture) and more information on the new Gateway to Growth can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/growth-gateway-announced-at-uk-africa-investment-summit). A portal for the latter is currently under construction.

This was followed by a Q&A session with Simon:

**Is** [**LEGEND**](https://www.gov.uk/international-development-funding/legend-piloting-responsible-land-related-investments) **active in Malawi?**

Yes, it is.

**Can DFID help with the cleaning of imported rice/sugar?**

There is support for cleaning in country, and farmers are being helped to reach the same standards of intermediary processors.

**Is there space for similar work to be done in other areas within Malawi?**

Please refer to the Gateway to Growth.

**Deputy Chief Executive of the SMP Stuart Brown** tabled a [Report](https://reliefweb.int/report/malawi/malawi-ipc-acute-food-insecurity-analysis-november-2019-march-2020-issued-january-2020) from relief web of January 7th which estimated that in the period November 2019 - March 2020, which is the peak of the hunger season, approximately 1.9 million people in Malawi would be food insecure. This was followed by an open discussion on the food security situation in Malawi. Some highlighted the difficulties in harvesting maize due to the very short period of the year where this is possible. The high cost of maize is also a problem, with a 50kg bag costing 80,000 kwacha. A family of 15 may have this amount between them, making it very difficult to afford enough food for all of them. Farmers must also be careful to balance the amount of their harvest that they sell with the amount that they keep for consumption. It was noted that the market is depressed following the rainy season, and solutions for this need to be sought. However, mitigating these issues will be a long process. For more information on food security in Malawi, DFID recommends the [ICC](https://iccwbo.org/) and the SMP Bulletin (if you do not receive the latter but would like to, please contact the SMP via info@scotland-malawipartnership.org).

David then asked what members would like to see from the Forum going forward, and what work the SMP could do to support members in this area. Attendees expressed that they found the sharing of knowledge, contacts, experiences and challenges very useful. Receiving updates in person from well-known figures in the field is also beneficial. This all helps to map who is doing what and where. There were requests for more support and advice within the UK for those importing goods from Malawi. Members would also like to hear the experiences of those using newer farming technology and equipment.

David concluded the meeting, summarising that it is useful for members to convene in this Forum to share expertise and challenges, how to overcome the latter and disseminate credible/verified information on food security. The SMP should continue to engage DFID and other donors for expertise and leverage, and continue to promote Malawian Fairtrade products.

The meeting closed with a final round of networking over tea and Mzuzu coffee.